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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9461  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 2945  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNS/COMSOCOPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T MANILA 004660

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STATE FOR EAP, PM, AND EAP/MTS  
USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO AND J5  
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP  
JOINT STAFF/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2016  
TAGS: PTER MARR MASS MOPS MCAP PREL  
SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 9 UPDATE ON JOLO OPERATIONS

REF: MANILA 4508 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: (U) Pol/C Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C/REL AUS) The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) operation to capture or kill the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) leadership on the island of Jolo is ending its 15th week. Khadaffy Janjalani, Abu Solaiman, Dulmatin, and Umar Patek are believed to have split up into smaller groups to avoid capture, and may be seeking to link up with a boat to flee the island.

¶2. (S/REL AUS) 3rd Marine Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Juancho Sabban, told poloff on November 9 that Philippine Marine troops had seized a hidden boat November 7/8 in the vicinity of Kalingkalang in the southeastern corner of Jolo that the terrorists may have been hoping to use to escape. Sabban claimed that his Marines had infiltrated a source inside the ASG logistical network providing support to the terrorist leaders, and hoped that this could provide a further breakthrough leading to their capture. He said the Rewards for Justice program was a valuable tool in this effort, noting that his men were circulating among the population small, card-sized photos of the wanted terrorists. Sabban observed that the campaign to depict the JI as foreigners and criminals was having an impact and helping to diminish popular support for their cause. (Comment: Embassy and JSOTF-P cannot yet confirm this operation. End comment)

¶3. (C/REL AUS) In his November 3 visit to Jolo, MG Eugenio Cedo, Commander of Western Mindanao Command, told his assembled officers that none of them would leave the island until all the high value targets were either captured or killed. Philippine Marine, Special Forces, and Scout Ranger units continue actively to patrol in central and southern Jolo and to occupy key terrain and camps formerly controlled by the ASG/JI. Brigadier General Rafael, the Task Force Comet Commander, recently proposed the establishment of a new Joint Special Operations Task Force under TF Comet to coordinate and synchronize the activity of all Philippine special operations forces on the island, including Marine Force Reconnaissance, Scout Rangers, Special Operations, and Navy Special Warfare units. The proposal remains under consideration.

¶4. (SBU) The AFP is maintaining a vigorous series of medical civic action programs on Jolo. At a November medical mission

in the Patikul region, an area formerly controlled by the ASG, over 600 patients turned up for treatment. Another medical program is planned for Indanan on November 11. PM Assistant Secretary Hillen will have the opportunity to visit this site during his trip to the island that day.

¶5. (S/REL AUS) The Philippine Navy's maritime cordon around Jolo remains a significant factor for the terrorists, with recent intelligence reporting indicating that they are worried about the effects of the blockade. To date, the Philippine Navy (backed up by the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support of JTF-515) has conducted over 3300 maritime interdictions since the August 1 start of "Operation Ultimatum."

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